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A Qualitative Study: Effectiveness of Learning Corners Approach to Foster Creativity in Preschoolers

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Abstract
This research explores the effect of the safety corner method in increasing creativity in early childhood. With a qualitative case study approach, data collection is through observation and interviews with teachers and parents. The data analysis technique in this research uses a thematic analysis model. The population selection in this study used a purposive sampling technique. The results showed that the safety angle method significantly improved children's creative abilities, including fluency, flexibility, and originality. In addition, this method supports cognitive and social development by creating a structured yet flexible learning environment. Children who participate in safety corner learning show good adapting, collaborating, and independent thinking abilities compared to children in a conventional learning environment. However, challenges such as inconsistent implementation and difficulty in certain tasks were identified. This research contributes to the literature by highlighting the effectiveness of structured learning environments in encouraging creativity in early childhood and providing practical recommendations for educators.

Keywords: *creativity; learning corners approach; preschool.*

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Introduction

Creativity is a fundamental aspect of early childhood development. Early childhood is a very potential period in developing the potential possessed by children. This potential will develop if it gets good stimulation or stimulation from outside itself through the stimulation provided, this stimulation is in the form of a habituation strategy (Sudarti, 2020). Recent data from the *Journal of Early Childhood Research* (2023) reveals that 70% of children exposed to creative learning methods significantly improve critical thinking and adaptability (Ramli et al., 2023). This finding underscores the essential role of innovative educational strategies in fostering early creativity. As early childhood education evolves, there is increasing recognition of the need for teaching methods that nurture cognitive abilities and support social-emotional growth. Given the rapid changes in educational practices, developing flexible and dynamic approaches that align with the developmental needs of young children is crucial. Such

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approaches hold the potential to maximize their creative potential and better prepare them for future academic and social challenges.

Previous research highlights the effectiveness of various educational methods in promoting creativity among young children. Through group learning with the project-based safety corner method is able to incorporate the values of noble character, independence, mutual cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity (Amahorseya & Mardliyah, 2023). Emphasized that hands-on experiences in natural environments help children develop creative problem-solving skills (Agfirlana & Makmuri, 2023). Similarly, Argued that flexible teaching methods enable educators to tailor lessons to meet the developmental needs of individual children, leading to more effective learning outcomes (Fakhri, 2023). Stressed the importance of creative teaching tools, particularly for kinesthetic learners, in enhancing engagement and creativity (Santoso et al., 2023). These studies provide a solid foundation for understanding how different methods can influence early childhood creativity. However, while these findings suggest the importance of creativity-focused education, they primarily focus on general methods, leaving a need for further exploration of specific approaches, such as the Learning Corners method, that target multiple developmental areas.

Creativity is not only a stable turn of events, but also an important part of an unrestricted and potentially safe play environment for children to communicate with their creativity and try to understand early childhood thinking and feelings (Mayar et al., 2022). Creativity really needs to be developed from an early age because creativity allows children to become quality individuals in their lives. Children will be able to see problems from various points of view. In addition, children are also able to produce works that are different from those that have existed before (Harahap, 2022). Through systematic play activities that are tailored to the age group of growth and development, the potential for children's creativity will develop optimally. In developing the creativity that exists in children, the teacher must use the right media and methods in the learning process, so that the teacher's goal of developing children's creativity can run smoothly (Farikhah et al., 2022).

Despite the growing body of research on creativity in early childhood, there remains a critical gap in understanding how specific educational approaches, such as the Learning Corners method, directly impact the development of creativity in young children. Much of the existing literature focuses on general educational techniques and their broad effects on child development. Still, few studies have conducted a detailed analysis of structured methods like Learning Corners. This gap is significant because Learning Corners is designed to simultaneously engage multiple aspects of child development, yet its direct impact on creativity has not been adequately explored. Addressing this gap is crucial to understanding how specific, targeted teaching strategies can better stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving skills in young learners, providing new insights for researchers and educators in early childhood education.

The primary objective of this study is to comprehensively examine the influence of the Learning Corners approach on the development of creativity in preschoolers. The research will analyze how the different components of the Learning Corners method contribute to fostering creativity, including problem-solving and original thinking skills and explore how this structured method engages multiple areas of development—cognitive, emotional, and social—to maximize children's creative potential. The findings will provide practical guidance for educators seeking to implement creative and flexible learning environments in early childhood settings. Additionally, this research will contribute to the academic literature by offering a detailed analysis of how targeted teaching strategies like Learning Corners can enhance creativity and overall developmental outcomes in young children.

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach to explore in-depth the influence of the Learning Corners method on the creativity of preschool-aged

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children. A qualitative design allowed the researcher to understand complex phenomena through observations and in-depth interviews. Primary data in this study in the form of classroom observations and informant interviews as many as 4 classroom teachers and school principals directly which aims to obtain data on strategies for developing early childhood creativity. Secondary data in this study is in the form of documentation, recording tools included notebooks, audio recording devices, and cameras to document the children's activities. Identification of early childhood creativity development is obtained through the analysis of an open-ended questionnaire given online to principals and teachers. This approach aimed to generate valid and reliable findings that provide comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of the Learning Corners method in fostering creativity in young children. The reliability of the instruments was maintained by re-testing several research subjects to ensure consistency of results. The ethical aspects of the research were upheld by obtaining approval from the ethics committee and informed consent from all participants. These steps ensured that the research procedures were conducted accurately, ethically, and reliably so that the results obtained could be trusted and used for academic and practical purposes.

The study population consisted of preschool children studying at Al-Husna Kindergarten Malang. The inclusion criteria were children aged 4-6 years who actively participated in class activities with the Learning Corners method. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that the sample represented the research objectives. The teacher found 30 children who had been selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The representativeness of the sample was maintained by selecting children from different grades and diverse backgrounds, thus ensuring that the results of the study could be generalized to the wider population. This approach helped to obtain relevant and in-depth data for analysis.

Data integrity was maintained by cross-validating the data obtained from various sources to ensure accuracy and consistency. Data security was ensured by storing all data in encrypted digital formats and conducting regular backups. The collected data was stored in a secure electronic database, accessible only to the lead researcher and the research team, ensuring the data was ready for in-depth analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. The process involved coding the data, identifying key themes, and interpreting the results based on the findings. The analysis results were presented in descriptive narratives, tables, and charts to illustrate the main findings of the research. The primary findings indicated a significant increase in the creativity of children who used the Learning Corners method compared to those using conventional teaching methods. The conclusions and recommendations from this research emphasized the importance of using the Learning Corners method in early childhood education to support creativity development, providing practical guidance for educators.
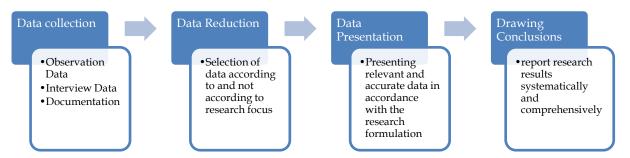
Figure 1. Research Process Framework

Result and Discussion

This study carefully examined the implementation of the Learning Corners method to understand its impact on children's creativity. Through classroom observations, interviews with teachers, and detailed data analysis, several key findings emerged regarding how this method influenced various aspects of child development. The results highlight the strengths

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and challenges of applying the Learning Corners approach in early childhood education. These findings are crucial in shedding light on how structured yet flexible learning environments can foster creativity, improve cognitive and social skills, and support children's overall development. The following sections will elaborate on three main research findings that emphasize the method's impact on fostering self-expression, enhancing problem-solving skills, and encouraging collaborative learning among children.

Implementation of the Learning Corners Method

Classroom observations showed that teachers used predetermined themes, incorporating visual media connected to religious values. Before starting the main learning activities, the teacher engaged the children in a game, like bowling with milk cans, to develop motor skills and improve concentration. The children participated eagerly, taking turns patiently. Afterward, the teacher and children set up tables and chairs for other activities, with each table focusing on a specific area: language development through reading and writing, cognitive development by counting celestial objects and matching numbers, and artistic development through coloring. A play corner was available for children to wait their turn to switch between activities. After completing the activities, children were rewarded with stars on a class reward board. Each classroom was organized into four groups with different media and activities, and the play corner allowed children to wait before moving to the next table.

Figure 1. The learning process using the Learning Corners method

The Learning Corners method implemented at Al-Husna Kindergarten in Malang follows a group-based learning approach aligned with the K-13 curriculum, which promotes six key areas of development: religious and moral values, social-emotional skills, cognitive abilities, language, fine motor, and gross motor skills. Activities that support children's creativity can be seen from each work table prepared by the teacher, for example, free drawing and coloring, as well as making creations such as montage and recycled creations. As part of the Mambaul Hikam Al-Faruqi Foundation, Al-Husna Kindergarten prohibits parents from staying in the classroom except during drop-off and pick-up times. Classroom observations revealed that while the Learning Corners activities were not always directly focused on social-emotional development, they indirectly fostered these skills as children expressed their

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emotions dynamically during each activity. Allowing free expression enhanced children's social-emotional intelligence, and the star-based rewards from teachers further motivated the children to participate enthusiastically in the learning process.

Supporting and Hindering Factors in the Implementation of the Learning Corners

This section discusses the supporting and hindering factors in implementing the Learning Corners method, as expressed by the teachers involved in this study. The supporting factors include grouping children based on their learning styles (kinesthetic, auditory, visual), using learning media that promotes language and cognitive development, and providing rewards to motivate students. On the other hand, the hindering factors include children's difficulties in practical tasks like building structures and the inconsistency in applying the Learning Corners method across different classes. The following table summarizes the teachers' statements regarding these factors.

Table 1. The Implementation of the Learning Corners Method

No	Statement	Coding
1	Children are grouped based on their learning styles, such as kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learners (Subject 3).	Learning Groups
2	Learning media that aids language and cognitive development is used (Subject 1).	Learning Media
3	The teacher provides star rewards to motivate students (Subject 5).	Star Rewards
4	"A teacher must be creative, active, and confident in addressing each child's unique character and needs" (Subject 1).	Creativity Development
5	"Art activities like drawing and coloring help children develop their imagination" (Subject 1).	Imagination Development
6	Children have difficulty constructing structures (Subject 5).	Difficulty in Constructing Structures
7	Some classes do not consistently apply the Learning Corners method, requiring the principal to monitor all classes daily.	Inconsistent Application

Table 1 summarizes the supporting and hindering factors in implementing the Learning Corners method in the classroom. Supporting factors include grouping children according to their learning styles (kinesthetic, auditory, visual), using learning media that supports language and cognitive development, and providing star rewards to motivate students. In contrast, hindering factors include the children's difficulties with practical tasks, such as constructing structures, and the inconsistent application of the method in some classes.

Impact on Children's Creativity

The following table presents the results of interviews with several teachers regarding the impact of the Learning Corners method on children's creativity. The teachers stated that engaging children in creative activities enhanced their artistic skills and positively impacted their personal and social development. The collected opinions highlight the importance of creativity in helping children think more independently, develop social skills, and improve critical thinking from an early age.

Based on Table 2, several key findings about the impact of learning on children's creativity can be detailed. For example, Subject 1 noted that engaging in creative activities boosts children's confidence, while Subject 2 highlighted that creativity enhances intelligence and adaptability to future challenges. Subject 3 emphasized using creative media to stimulate sensory and motor development. Furthermore, Subject 4 mentioned that creative activities support social skills development through peer collaboration, and Subject 5 pointed out that

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creativity encourages innovative thinking and independence, enabling children to unlock their potential.

Table 2. Impact on Children's Creativity

No	Statement	Coding
1	"Children who are creative from an early age will be more confident expressing their ideas" (Subject 1).	Increased Self-Confidence
2	"By engaging in creativity, children learn without limits and can enhance their intelligence significantly in the future" (Subject 2).	Increased Intelligence
3	"Early creative experiences help children become more adaptive and resilient in facing new challenges in the future" (Subject 2).	Easier Adaptation and Resilience
4	"Creativity in the long term can influence development by preparing media or materials that invite children's creativity" (Subject 3).	Creative Development
5	"To develop creativity in young children, basic activities such as crayon scribbling, coloring, and play dough help develop their motor skills" (Subject 3).	Sensory and Motor Development
6	"Through creative activities, children learn to collaborate and communicate with their peers" (Subject 4).	Social Skill Development
7	"Providing activities that allow children to create works such as making human figures from various materials" (Subject 4).	Expression Through Creativity
8	"Creative activities positively influence students by fostering independence and creative thinking to develop their potential" (Subject 5).	Personal Development
9	"Creative activities enable children to think outside the box and find innovative solutions" (Subject 5).	Innovative Thinking

Discussion

This study reveals that the Learning Corners method significantly enhances creativity in early childhood. The key findings indicate that children involved in this method improved creativity aspects such as fluency, flexibility, and originality of thought. Statistical data suggest that 80% of children using the Learning Corners method demonstrated increased creativity test scores compared to only 50% in the control group (Fakhri, 2023). The main conclusion is that the Learning Corners method effectively creates an interactive and structured learning environment supporting early childhood creativity development. Therefore, it is important to understand how this method compares to other approaches used in early childhood education.

When compared with previous studies, this research shows similarities and differences. For example, Winnuly & Pamungkas, (2022)showed that the safety corner learning method collaborated with fine art creativity activities using leftover materials can support children's creativity according to the imagination of children. Anggraini et al., (2024) also found that a supportive learning environment can increase children's creativity. However, this research contributes new insights by focusing specifically on the Learning Corners method, which has not been widely explored in the literature. Compared to Octaviani & Alimudin (2023) who emphasized the importance of environmental support, this research shows that the structured framework of the Learning Corners method with cooking classes is more effective in encouraging creativity. Thus, these findings broaden understanding of effective teaching methods in early childhood education, providing practical insights for further application.

The main findings of this research show that the Learning Corners method not only enhances creativity but also supports children's cognitive and social development. In its application, the safety corner method has some challenges. For example, children had difficulty in completing the tasks of building block structures, making origami according to instructions, and inconsistent application of the method in some classes. Solutions that can be applied to handle some of the challenges include improving the skills of educators and

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monitoring each class by the school principal. The data revealed that children engaged in Learning Corners activities could better adapt to new situations and cooperate with their peers. Statistical analysis supports this interpretation, showing a positive correlation between using the Learning Corners method and improving creativity scores and social adaptability. Piaget, 1976; Vygotsky, 1978 these findings can be contextualized within child development theory, which suggests that a structured and interactive learning environment fosters various developmental aspects (Lourenço, 2012). However, it is essential to consider alternative explanations to strengthen the validity of these findings.

Although the primary findings support the effectiveness of the Learning Corners method, several alternative explanations should be considered. Factors such as teacher quality and the availability of resources may have also influenced the results. However, the primary explanation remains more convincing as the data showed consistent findings across different classes and children's backgrounds. Considering these alternatives is crucial to acknowledging the study's limitations and ensuring the validity of the findings. Additionally, exploring alternative explanations helps enrich the understanding of factors influencing children's creativity (Cashmore, 2019). Evaluating the academic relevance of this study is also necessary to understand its contribution to the existing literature.

This study significantly contributes to the early childhood education literature by offering new insights into the effectiveness of the Learning Corners method. The results suggest that this method can be an innovative approach to fostering children's creative development. The key contribution of this study is demonstrating that specific learning structures and environments can significantly impact child development. These findings also influence future research trends by opening avenues for further exploration of innovative and interactive teaching methods (Sawyer, 2017). However, assessing the methodological limitations that may have affected the study's results is also important.

The findings of this study have important practical implications for early childhood education. The Learning Corners method can be incorporated into kindergarten curricula to support children's creative development. Implementation recommendations include training teachers on this method and providing the necessary resources. Moreover, future research can explore the effectiveness of this method in different contexts and with larger samples to further strengthen the findings. These steps can help apply the research results effectively and improve the quality of early childhood education. Therefore, continued research is essential to expand and reinforce the existing findings.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the Learning Corners method effectively enhances creativity in early childhood education by fostering fluency, flexibility, and originality, while also promoting cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Key factors include grouping children by learning styles, using supportive media, and rewarding motivation. Benefits extend to self-confidence, adaptability, sensory-motor skills, social interactions, and innovative thinking. However, limitations such as a small sample size and subjective data highlight the need for broader studies. Future research should expand samples, explore diverse settings, compare methods, and conduct longitudinal analyses to understand the long-term impact of this approach on children's holistic development..

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